



Knoff Style - August 2016

Dear Nicky & James,

I have been in Shanghai for a month now, I looked at a few yoga studios, and all of them have Hatha yoga compartmentalized into the standard styles of: Iyengar, Ashtanga Vinyassa, Mysore, Hot, and many more, etc. I have been with Knoff Yoga from the very beginning – "Knoff Yoga combines the anatomical alignment and intelligence of Iyengar Yoga, with the energetic principles of Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga, resulting in the 5 Pillars of Practice."

When speaking with the owners of these yoga studios they all ask me, "So what style do you teach? You have to choose one!" Of course I explain the history of Knoff Yoga, that it is a complete system, that you can't just chop it up, but... And besides, Iyengar & Jois had the same teacher and he was taught Hatha. I would love to open my own school in China but that is not an option right now – in Canada it will be! I am trying to get into some sort of partnership, bring Knoff yoga to China, and invite Nicky for TTC.

Would you please share your wisdom & experience with me and guide/coach me as to how to proceed as I am certain this is not the first time you have had to deal with this...

Thank you so much

*Love always,
Daniel for Louise*

Dear Daniel & Louise,

Any style of yoga that includes yoga postures is technically Hatha Yoga. Using posture as the primary tool for spiritual awareness and growth is the forte of Hatha Yoga.

Hatha translates to forceful, which really means effort, but another way of understanding this approach is to separate Ha = Sun and Tha = Moon. Then you get the same concept as Yin/Yang, i.e. duality.

With this understanding, we are using the tools and techniques of Hatha Yoga to bring together (Yoke) the body and mind via the breath. At a superficial level, it implies

balancing the Right side of the body with the Left. At a deeper level, it means harmonizing the Right and Left hemispheres of the brain.

There are other traditional approaches to spiritual awareness that do not include postures, e.g. Bhakti Yoga - the path of devotion, Karma Yoga - the path of selfless service, Jnana Yoga - the path of discernment, etc.

So any style of yoga you can think of, which includes yoga postures, e.g. Iyengar, Ashtanga, Sivananda, Bikram, Power, Flow, Yin, Anusara, Vini, etc. is really Hatha Yoga.

The problem with many of the "modern" styles is that they have forgotten about the real purpose and have devolved into "exercise and relaxation". They will argue differently, but if you look at what they teach, they have removed the other tools/techniques of Hatha Yoga, e.g. Pranayama, Meditation, Ethical & Social guidelines, etc.

Because the majority of yoga teachers do not really understand yoga, then you can understand why the public has no clue either. The public now equates beautiful, scantily clad, slim young women, doing advanced asana as yoga.

Bikram Yoga has been hosting yoga competitions and the questions arise, is this really yoga? Because generally yogis are polite and inclusive and not wanting to hurt people's feelings, the tepid answer has been yes - sort of. Now when you see that Bikram Choudhury has at least six sexually harassment lawsuits, if not more, and has declared bankruptcy, you realize that it really has been a sham and our gut feeling that Bikram was fake, was correct.

So you are dealing with ignorance and that is challenging. We have to do our best to educate, but this is a long-term process.

You could suggest that the yoga school owners look at www.knoffyoga.com, but they probably still would not understand.

So when we are faced with your situation, we tick the Hatha Yoga box. But, when there is the opportunity to explain, expand and educate, we give a version of the above discussion.

The other styles of Hatha Yoga were not styles until a number of people started doing them. We need more people doing Knoff Yoga.

Namaste

James E. Bryan
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Program Director & Master Teacher

KNOFF YOGA